

BRAZIL WITH BRAZILIANS

notes about modeling of political meanings in the crisis of the Portuguese Ancient Regime in America

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Placed in perspective, the resurgent interest for the national issue has served to confer greater visibility to a process of historiographic review which is already ongoing since the end of the last century, which, thickened since the 1980's, gave back to the topic of "our background" the condition of historical problem with an urgent current nature. Faced with the search of the intelligibility of the national problematic, a political phenomenon around which there's no analytical consensus due to the difficulty to "conciliate its universality with its concrete necessary uniqueness" (Anderson, 2000, p.7), those who devoted themselves here to investigate it often did so according to the marks of the rereading of the inheritance of which they were trustees, naturally from the point of view of the theoreticians mentioned above dictated by requirement, on the one hand, of the empirical nature of their researches and, on the other hand, of their alignments with the historiographic subjects of their respective elections.

That inevitable oscillatory movement between what is known and the empirical evidences of its incompleteness is nothing new. On the contrary, it's in the realm of the confrontation between the accumulated knowledge and new questions raised by the present that the relevance scale of the (re)constituted knowledge has been defined, as it still is.

In the Brazilian case, like the other nations that emerged from the crisis of the Ancient Regime in America, the analytical framing of the national problematic tended to reverberate, since the consolidation of the Empire as sovereign State, the paradigms of the great European cultural tradition. Since then, and despite the specific nature of the path of humankind involved in its building, those who studied the issue elected the National State as the focus of their interest – that political device inseparable from the liberal revolution which subverted the old order to become one of the main vectors of the political

arrangement of the world system in constant adaptation to the universalization of the bourgeois order.

Today it is common knowledge that the history of the National States – and of the nations in their current configurations – can't be understood without taking into account the huge cultural investments centered in the modeling of national memories aiming at the adhesion of the citizens to the States – either real or planned – to which they refer, collective memories supported, in each specific case, by the arguing of ancestral cohesions united by ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious characteristics – historically proven or invented in an opportunistic moment, always with the goal of creating an integrated system of referents that enables the citizen to place him or herself in a world of national realities shaped according to the same basic pattern of symbolic construction which currently marks out his or her adhesion to a national community different from all others, it's worth saying, from his or her national identity.

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When they took office in Lisbon's Constituent *Cortes*, the representatives from São Paulo brought a systematic display of the political directives which they were in charge of observing amid the great *regeneration* effort of the Portuguese nation through the constitutional path: the *Recalls and Notes of the Provisional Government to the Representatives of the Province of São Paulo* (Falcão, 1963, v.II, p.93-102). The document, ascribed to José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, came in the wrong way, as far as the architecture of the State that was being constituted was concerned, to what seemed to be a consensus until then. According to the *Notes*, the format of the State to be invented by the constituents should serve the political desire of union of the Kingdoms of Brazil and Portugal, and no longer of the many provinces gathered around a single center. To do that, they resorted to the past as a political tool in a surprising manner: they moved the general connection of the course of the Portuguese nation which was gathered at the time in *Cortes* from the concept of uniqueness of that history to that of the asymmetry of its internal developments.

Unlike the American delegations which integrated themselves to the works with goals shaped by the deep-rooted of political consequences of a local nature in the memories of the respective elites, like, in the case of those from Pernambuco, of the recall of the brutal aggravations that came after the defeat of the Revolution of 1817, or in those from Bahia, of the subordination that Bahia never assimilated in relation to Rio de Janeiro, the representatives from São Paulo resorted to the past as a platform for the future. They didn't use it to correct mistakes along the way: they used it as an instrument of political realism.

The document, one of the most analyzed by the historiography concerning the Independence period, conditioned the adhesion to the constitutional text elaborated at the time to the fulfillment of the requirements imposed by what was specific to the reiteration, in good order, of the organizing structures of the social life in Brazil, a land of "various habits [...] and unique statistical circumstances"

(ibidem, p.96) because its population “is made up of [...] classes of several colors and both free people and slaves” (ibidem, p.98). That resort to the *past-present*, which brought within it, even though it wasn’t explicit, the hypothesis that the Portuguese nation had become irreducible, due to the history of its parts, to a unique constitutional order, completed itself, as far as its American sphere was concerned, with the argumentation of the social conflagration potential within it silted up.

By resorting to the argument that the extension of civil attributes to the “miserable slaves” brings within it the perspective of “riots and insurrections, which might lead to scenes of blood and horrors” (ibidem), the Junta of São Paulo used slavery as a powerful political triumph, since it corresponded to what was driven in the collective unconsciousness of the American elites.

At the end of it all, slavery wasn’t the object of substantial deliberation by the *Cortes* at Lisbon, neither did the Constitution they eventually approved get in force in Brazil made independent in 1822, nor did the Portuguese uniqueness in Brazil established there was taken into consideration again for the framing of a national Brazilian memory shaped according to the view of its elites engaged in the building of *their* State and of *their* nation at least until, already in a new situation, the propositions by Von Martius (1845, p.389-411) about the explicable centrality of the idea of the fusion of three races (the European, Amerindian and African ones), in 1843.

The refusal of the Brazilian elites to see themselves as dominant segments of objectively structured societies based on slavery and of their multiple historical unfoldings (cf. Fernandes, 1976), that is, as *tout court* enslavers, is, in itself, a historiographic problem within the scope of the permanences instead of the ruptures.

To deal with that regularity, it’s convenient to get back to the already consecrated idea that the conquest and the colonization of America, in each of their fields of activity, have engendered a turning that changed the *conquerer/colonist* into *settler*, a new character who, in Portuguese America, revealed itself when he began to organize his future projects – and the forms of his self-representation - not only as agent of the expansion of the king of Portugal’s domain (and, through it, of Christianity), but also, and at the same time, in that of conductor of the extended reiteration of a specific societal formation that he considers as his own.

The *settler*, unlike the *conquerer*, acknowledges himself as being part of a collective course endowed with a peculiar founding ancestorship of a specific collective identity, the politicization of which starts, from then on, to depend on the nature of the interface that his community starts to maintain with others engendered and structured according to the same general criteria. Thus, the settlers from São Paulo acknowledged themselves as being paulistas, clearly different from the ones from Pernambuco, even though in the confrontation with American subjects of the king of Spain they were considered as Portuguese, and

that's exactly how they considered themselves in face of the Spanish (cf. Jancsó & Pimenta, 2000, p.127-76). The settlers, either from São Paulo, Pernambuco or Bahia, were Portuguese in the face of all who were not, which didn't make them different from people from Alentejo or Lisbon, since all of them were equally endowed with the attributes the combination of which defined a national identity at the time: they were subjects of the same monarch, bound by the same laws, had the same religion, and spoke the same language.

However, to be a Portuguese in America implied, by force of the general conditions of existence that derived from the nature of the colonization of its many parts, being it in an unprecedented manner. The settler, either from São Paulo, Pernambuco or, later, from Goiás or Minas Gerais, was a Portuguese who seized Indians, owned a crowd of enslaved men, devastated very extensive forests, ate manioc flour, who was half-breed (of Indian and white), mulatto, characteristics that result from the internal dynamics of the social formations of a new kind that he created, and in the scope of which the *other* was no longer the Spanish, the French or the Dutch, but the enslaved Indian and African who, even though organically integrated to the societies in colony, didn't participate in the national community.

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In the various parts of America, the asymmetry among them and the peninsular sphere of the Monarchy, simultaneously to the hierarchies that organized the differences – metropolis subordinating colonies, nobles subordinating plebeians, free people subordinating slaves, the Crown subordinating Chambers and captainships and, as for them, the general ones subordinating the annex ones, etc. -, reverberated in cutting lines that should always be considered.

The first and more general of them was in the fact that the kingdom was a scenario of slow structural adjustments, unlike what took place with the *Brasis*, spaces of their permanent subversion. That, which was beautifully described by Fernando Novais, has great significance for the perception of the American asymmetry, where the structures of the social life have become at the same time *replicants* and *deviants* of the European paradigms. Bent on the colonial daily life, Novais (1997, p.14) called the attention, resorting to the insight of Brother Vicente do Salvador, to the inversion of the public and private spheres of existence, if compared to the custom of the kingdom, emphasizing that the “inversion [...] was also a form of articulation”, which implied, in the limit, their recreation.

That *Brazilian* characteristic – the reinvention through the inversion of the kingdom model of articulation of the public and private spheres of the existence, function of peripheral and subordinated function, lasted, always adapted to the new circumstances, until the implantation and consolidation of the Brazilian Empire, it's worth saying, until when the new State and the new nation, already with an irreducible configuration to that of the *Ancien Régime* model from whose crisis they emerged, they had their structuring bases defined.

In another pitch, the same asymmetry translated itself in another cutting line, in that case dividing the Portuguese nation into two due to the substantial difference among the societal principles of their parts. According to the terms of the law that ended slavery in Portugal in 1773,¹ there, as “has been the case in all others in Europe”,² slavery was abolished in observance to the precepts of the “Christian Union and of the civil society [that] makes it intolerable today” (Silva, 1858), unlike what would had to be observed in America, where that rule didn’t apply “in any way”, as the governor of the captainship of Pernambuco registered in the same year of 1773,³ when he was faced with the circulation of copies of the legal text which sharpened the curiosity and the interest of black and mulatto men in Paraíba.

In the opposite direction of what was going on in the kingdom, the society of which adjusted to the patterns of the civilization of the Lights and to the requirements of a capitalism that was expanding quickly, those of Portuguese America reinforced their enslavement nature, apart from which they were no different from what was common to the overseas domains of the European powers of the modern times.

In a few documents of the 18th Century, settlers exposed slavery as being a condition for the existence of the Portuguese nation in America with a similar clearness to that of the terms of the *Representation to His Majesty of the Plantation Owners, Sugarcane and Tobacco Farmers from Bahia*, dated January 7th, 1752.⁴ In it, the signatories submitted to the king’s consideration, preceded by an analysis of the causes of the ruin of the great American farming, a set of measures that aimed at the reorganization of the transatlantic and inter-captainship slave traffic, which were crucial, according to them, to avoid that “the State of Brazil and, as a consequence, the Kingdom, weakens and declines” (*Representation*, pg.1). In their argumentation, they recalled that among all the efforts by the “Portuguese nation”, the one “that has been discovering the most lands in the world” (*ibidem*), the only one that remained to the “Portuguese Crown was the State of Brazil, [...] reduced to a disastrous situation” (*ibidem*, pg.4) because of the destabilization due to the explosive demand from Minas Gerais, for the Portuguese-American slave market. Showing the monarch that on the traffic “depends the entire Brazil, and it hurts to see that the convenience [of the merchants that control it] will spoil and destroy such an important State and with so many dwellers”. And since “that was [...] the disorder of Brazil” (*ibidem*), and since “the slaves were the most precious [...] goods”, on whose “lack or abundance” depended the result of its farming and of the other related activities, they asked for his intervention towards the reduction of the costs “of manufacturing” of the products of the land by means of measures that reduced the “price [always ensuring the supply of] the greatest quantity of them, [since] all the services depend on their arms” (*ibidem*, pg.6).

Their plea couldn’t have been either clearer or more improper in a context of absolute fascination by the Court for the mineral wealth the flow of which

to Europe was at its peak. But despite the political unrealism that is one of its trademarks, the document is a brilliant display of the view of history, organized in several scopes - global, national, American and local – of that colonial fraction of the Portuguese elite, in whose ordering of the world Brazil emerges as specific universe of the combination, organized around the categories *Monarchy* and slavery, of the same polarities that operate in relation to the European system of nations: *unity-diversity*, *cooperation-conflict* and *identity-distinctiveness*.

It's the class empiric nature of the 81 signatories of the *Representation* – among whom were aligned the holders of important houses of the landed nobility together with hierarchs of powerful religious orders established in Bahia – that informs the equation contained within it to meet the requirements imposed by changes that jeopardized the reiteration conditions of the societal structures that they considered as permanent, but the control of which they were losing.

What's in the heart of the criticism that the people from Bahia made to those of Minas Gerais who, with their gold, disorganized the slave market, with the price of the *pieces* doubling in fifty years and jeopardizing the profitability of the formerly so lucrative agriculture, is the perception of a crisis that was real, but the nature of which they didn't understand. Their class experience silted up along two hundred years made them see - correctly – in the good *political* handling of the traffic the solution to the problems of their material wealth and power base, and made them identify – erroneously – their specific interests with the general interest of the State. Being a demonstration of to what extent what was specific to the reality that they created shaped their view of the world, the *Representation* also shows that, because of the nature of the crisis that made them submit it to the king, the people from Bahia saw slavery as a political variable that divided the Brazilian elites, unlike what, seventy years later in another context of crisis, was the understanding of the Board of São Paulo, as has already been seen.

What is, however, the plot of the identities – assumed or ascribed – that corresponded to the ordering of the polarity *unity-diversity* of the Portuguese nation according to the terms of the *Representation*? The document fully demonstrates that its signatories considered themselves as *Portuguese*. It's not included in the text that they considered themselves as *people from Bahia*, but the identification of the *other as being from Minas Gerais* refer to that identity formula, which is frequent, only as an example, in the *letters of friendship* contemporary of the Marquis of Lavradio (1978).

And how about Brazil as regarding collective identity? It's useless to search for something as being *Brazilian* in the *Representation*, a document that consists in the observance of standardized formulas, including the identity ones: in the face of the king, every subject was Portuguese. An "official" document, it can't contain the use of signs that have not been integrated yet, by means of the generalization of their use, to the common sense. To those signs with the appearance of neologisms waiting for the clearness of meaning that only the social practice can grant, therefore provisional and, for that reason, politically

incorrect (as we would say it today) in the universe opposite to the disrespect to the prescribed rule of the Ancient Regime, are in other sources: those destined to privacy or to its exposition to view.

Not because private diaries (or inquiries or literary works) don't follow rules and precepts commonly observed at the time when they were written, but because they contain registers of the non-policed subjectivity, in other words of the feelings, doubts and perplexities in the face of the world, of men and of time, such as the carefully preserved papers of Antonio Gomes Ferrão Castelo Branco, a nobleman, owner of plantations and cattle farms all through the backwood, secretary of the Brazilian Academy of the Reborn and one of the signatories of the *Representation of 1752*. In them, the *settler* reveals himself as being, at the same time, *Portuguese, from Bahia and Brazilian*.

However, what was that of being *Brazilian* to that descendant of an illustrious lineage that goes back to the early days of the colonization?⁵ The answer should be sought in his registers conscientiously organized amid the crisis that, general to Bahia, had become more threatening to the Ferrão Castelo Branco household for political reasons.

His father, Alexandre Gomes Ferrão, who had occupied prestigious posts – such as the purveyor's office of the Holy House of Mercy and the councillorship in the Chamber of Salvador⁶ – like the previous holders of that post, he was jettisoned for having entered a collision course with the viceroy André de Melo e Castro from the political environment of the capital, leaving to the first-born Antonio, besides many practical problems, a lesson that he was able to change into a success tool: always take into consideration to what extent were “dependent on the Governments those whose houses we have established through the conquests” (*Borrador*, p.3.v), a function of the close relationship between the public and the private instances of power in the Ancient Regime in the colony.

In a State of Bahia undergoing an economic crisis, politically in the edge and amid problems the complexity of which made him predict, with mordant sense of humor, “that if we live for one thousand years we will have demands while we have [something] to give to literate people” (*ibidem*, p.66 fr.), Antonio began to devote himself, always with the purpose to preserve and increase “the splendor, esteem and respect [of his] house” (*ibidem*, p.44 fr.), to the search of posts and honors, as was a common obsession to the Portuguese from Europe and America. He didn't leave anything to chance: he was interested both in awards of the orders and in military posts or, as mentioned in the letter of 1757 in which he recommended to his trustee in Lisbon that he paid attention to the vacancy of the governance which he considered reasonable to desire, not without previously rejecting positions in the “Coast of Africa or [...] India” (*ibidem*): only posts that became vacant, according to his own words, in “Brazil, which is my land” (*ibidem*), should be taken into consideration.

It's worth recalling that the idea of house⁷ involved a complex organization of tangible and symbolic values. As far as the formers are concerned, it assumed

the necessary wealth to live “by the law of the nobility”, enabling the proper public display of that condition, and involving the regular practice of the freedom when that was necessary, which was very frequent in any society of the Ancient Regime, mainly in the colony, where the basic rules of the hieratic practices coined in the metropolis were adjusted in a difficult manner to the societal processes which had their course there. It was a variant of that detour from the rule as a result of the colonial condition that Antonio had in mind when, amid one of his many struggles for posts and promotions, he was sorry for the “difficulties that a Brazilian finds when he wants to seek his raises” because of the “far ones who take away the fortunes” (*Borrador*, p.212 fr.).

By assuming that he was the “remote Brazilian” (*ibidem*, p.6), the learned man from Bahia signaled the difficulties of the settlers to reach the Court, the place of the assessment of merits that, when evaluated in a proper manner, could translate themselves into the wished mercies and into the correspondent honors that could provide access to the political sphere of power, that non-debated *locus* of the principles of the wealth of the established houses not only in America, but in the general scope of the Monarchy. And by doing so, it reveals another perspective, in that case of strict parliamentary content, of the perception of Brazil as a unit.

In the casting of the vision of Brazil that passes by the *Representation*, the condition of great enslaving farmer of Antonio Gomes outweighs that of member of the landed nobility, for what it’s based on class interest. In the one that reveals itself in his personal writings, the act of belonging to the nobility subordinates that of enslaving farmer, even though, in both cases, they’re inseparable.

In that sense, the writings by Antonio make it possible to go beyond what can be done through the analysis of the document of 1752, not because they are opposite to each other, but because they are complementary, like his double condition of enslaving farmer and nobleman. In them, their author plots, taking posts and positions as coordinates, a political geography of Brazil adjusted to the condition of members of the Portuguese nobility of the fraction of the farmers from Bahia who, according to criteria of lineage, benevolence of the prince or qualified knowledge were considered entitled to aspire to them. And let there be no doubt: they were posts and positions with a very significant monetary content, a component the importance of which is never sufficiently emphasized in the chronically de-monetarized economy within which the plantation owners lived “accomodating their creditors and grinding, which is how things happen among neighbors: land usage” (*ibidem*, p.63 fr.).

Recent studies such as the one carried out by Iris Kantor (2004) about the colonial academies inform on an American illustration the members of which, through different courses, were incorporated to the State apparatus and, through that way, impregnated by the political culture which was proper to it. That people, who ascended to positions of varied significance in the administration, tended to replicate the view of Brazil as unit like the high peninsular

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*Page of the Borrador manuscript. Antônio Gomes Ferrão Castello Branco.
Borrador in which I Enter all the letters that I write, begun on August 1st 1749,
being in Bahia. Bahia: 1749. 227 written pages*

Another page of the Borrador manuscript. Antônio Gomes Ferrão Castello Branco. Borrador in which I Enter all the letters that I write, begun on August 1st 1749, being in Bahia. Bahia: 1749. 227 written pages

administration staff, even though colored by the deviant viewpoint of the colonial subordination.

In the disperse illustrated environments of 18th Century America, the connections of which couldn't rely on instruments (at the time: the press, universities, academies) of sedimentation, extension and diffusion of the *lights*, the asymmetry inherent to the colonial pact, even though it permeated the outline of the variants of the mosaic of Luso-American *homelands*, never translated itself, even in situations of rehearsal of its subversion into colony, in the breaking of the chalk circle that turned the Monarchy – a concept that can't be taken as equivalent to that of State – into the only imaginable framework of its political *ratio*. That's present in the terms of the *Representation* of 1752, in the writings by Antonio Gomes Ferrão Castelo Branco, in the writings by the Arcadians from Minas Gerais already reflecting the intuition of a crisis hardly appears, as it also appears in the writings by Luís dos Santos Vilhena (1921). And that's also what can be noticed in memoirs, chorographies, annals, ephemeral situations, chronicles, biographies, praises, chronological deductions, essays, abstracts, history summaries, historical speeches, poems, journey reports, reports and Brazilian history books, in which the Monarchy was the organizing principle of the Brazilian diversity, as revealed by recent studies by Valdei Araújo and Denis Bernardes.⁸

The example provided by Antonio Gomes Ferrão Castelo Branco is unique, and the resort to it must not lead to the idea of some supposed cohesion of the Luso-American elites. They were multiple, occasionally they had conflicting interests, as well as different were the sedimentation levels of the historical experiences that made up his memoirs, even though all of them have resulted from the same basic mechanism which involved the combination of two simultaneous courses, but with different reach. One of those reaches corresponded, in the early 19th Century, to the area of influence of the great urban centers (Rio de Janeiro together with the cities from Minas Gerais and São Paulo, Salvador, Recife, Belém do Pará), each of which, since they made up the territorial basis of the power and command of the respective elites, was also the scenario of the successes that shaped the memory of each one as dominant class.

The other reach corresponded to the articulation of the several territories subject to their orders with the organizing pole of the Monarchy -Lisbon, unquestionable convergence hub of their commodities, legal demands, mercy requests and privileges, loyalties, solidarities or even of the political affections, of that set of practices that adjusted their collective memories to the hierarchies that derived from their colonial conditions. That basic mechanism, which in Bahia went back to 250 years before, in Minas Gerais to one century and fraction, in Goiás to a few decades, lost effectiveness, in 1808, when the Revolution, under the form of fierce resistance to it, became the general reference of the future projects of the Brazilian elites.

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With the installation of the Court at Rio de Janeiro, the organizing matrices of the collective memories of the colonial elites, shaped by the succession of contradictions, tensions and conflicts that characterize both reaches stated above, and finally silted up as being the accumulated political experience that is the basis of *its* history and of its political future projects, had to undergo a profound review. The multi-shaped political experience that they accumulated which, astonished, in 1808 was closer to the decision center of the power than they could have ever dreamed was losing political effectiveness for reasons which were previously unthinkable. For the Americans, unlike what took place with the peninsular subjects of His Majesty seized at the time by an incontestable sense of loss (cf. Alexandre, 1993), the new situation created with the moving of the Court to Rio de Janeiro generated great and positive expectations.

And as for the Monarchy as framework of the Portuguese-American mosaic, the enthusiastic adhesion to the new order produced a general irruption of what François-Xavier Guerra (1999-2000) called, upon analyzing the process that was in course at the time in Spanish America, *imperial patriotism*,⁹ and which found in the *Correio Braziliense*¹⁰ of Hypólito José da Costa its most remarkable spreading vehicle. And of a political pedagogy which considered the preservation of the unity of the Portuguese Monarchy a priority that subordinated everything else. As for Brazil, the strong core of its project consisted in making it liable of being thought not as juxtaposition, but as *synthesis of its parts*, as political body endowed with its own features within the Portuguese Monarchy, with which it broke an old tradition, which tended to value the specific.

Already in 1808, Hypólito, who was the heir of what was best in the Portuguese learned tradition, began to claim a radical administrative reform that submitted the Brazilian diversity to a centralized government, to a *Government of Brazil*, the sense of which is moved from the parts to a center that subordinates them and, by doing so, operates the synthesis that makes it possible to outline the new political entity - the *Empire of Brazil* - which the newspaper had already announced in its first issue (Jancsó & Slemian, 2002, p.4). That issue was recurrent in the pages of *Correio*, with the basic directives of the reforms that Hypólito considered imperative being outlined in 1809, when he got back to the topic, outlining the cardinal points of those that “are necessary in the government of Brazil” (ibidem, v.II, p.641). First of all, he considered as imperative to abolish the system of *captainships*, both a corrupted and corrupting colonial inheritance, replacing it by another one of “provinces and districts, granting to the Chambers the same rights they had in Portugal” (ibidem).

Next, there was the need to solve the limits disputes with Spain, a geopolitical problem which had a high potential to destabilize the internal order. Third, and once the new administrative division of the country had already been implanted, the population should be promoted, which didn't seem to him to be a difficult task. Between ironic and didactic, he reminded his readers that, for that to happen, the government would only have to attract “emigrates from all

parts of Europe, for which it's necessary " (ibidem), he put forward, "to ensure to them personal liberty and the right to property " (ibidem). The reforms would also contemplate the "introduction of science[...] an article [towards which] not even a single step has been taken in Brazil" (ibidem), and the program would have its high point with the extension¹¹ "to the Chambers, the only popular corporations in Brazil, [of the same] rights that the Chambers always enjoyed in Portugal [and which] make up the bases of the Courts" (Jancsó & Slemian, 2002), an item that deserved to be highlighted in an absolute manner since it introduced in the agenda of the debates the topic of the *ancestral liberties* that turned the Monarchy legitimate.

According to Hypólito, the solution for the evils of the Monarchy was to "consolidate all the Portuguese domains under a single Empire" (CB, v.IV, p.434), for which he recommended "provide to it the convenient unity by establishing the same administration and the same laws everywhere" (ibidem). Therefore, that was the more general outline of the political project that *Correio* advocated, a project which was centered in the Monarchy, an institution that sublimated – with the king embodying it – the unity of the Portuguese nation, and of the State with which it confounded itself.¹² "Portugal has been lost" (CB, v.XXI, apud Lima Sobrinho, 1977, p.192), Hypólito recalled already in 1818, "but [...] the Monarchy was saved, that's why the Monarch continued to exist, as meeting point of his subjects and of his States; neither could the foreign nations look at the Monarchy as being extinct, nor could the nationals lose the hope of seeing their King having his old rights restored" (ibidem).

As for the promotion of the population, Hypólito always made an effort to demonstrate the close connection between the induction of the European immigration and the gradual extinction of slavery. He claimed that "the slavery of the African Blacks [...] that went on through the entire life and passed on to the entire offspring is so opposite to the principles of the natural right and of the moral constitution of man that it's impossible for a country where slavery is admitted to the extent that it exists in Brazil to prosper as it must" (CB, v.VI, apud Lima Sobrinho, 1977, p.70); but, realistic, he admitted that a sudden extinction of slavery involved serious risks. For that reason, "there could be no better solution than its gradual abolition, simultaneous to the immigration of inhabitants from the North of Europe" (ibidem). That clearly explicit gradualism in the limited refusal of the "immediate and absolute extinction of slavery [...] a revolutionary measure with the most pernicious consequences" (CB, v.XV, apud Lima Sobrinho, 1977, p.133) led him to advocate the prohibition of the traffic – which was the core of the British politics at the time.

As has already be seen, Hypólito believed that the Monarchy would be a system integrated by Portugal with its dependencies, and Brazil with its parts, which were, beyond the obvious differences, holders of the attributes of a perfect complementary nature which were legacies of a common history. That representation of State and of the nation, *which considered the lack of hierarchic*

distinction of the parts as being the key of the harmony of the imperial system, collided with what his readers, men the great majority of whom were from the Ancient Regime, had as world view or by principle of their identity. Having said that, it's easy to admit that any reader of *Correio Braziliense* remained neutral in the face of the implications of the complex political equation imbedded in a proposal that advocated the intransigent defense of the Monarchy unity by means of the radical subversion of the structures from which its multi-secular political architecture has always nurtured itself, and on which it still rested: *the hierarchies that subordinated the colonies to the Metropolis to the same extent than the subjects to the King or, according to the terms of the newspaper, Brazil to Portugal*.

It's quite true that the transference of the Court and the end of the colonial exclusive had already set the fate of what was the principle of the colonial subordination in the only form known and lived until then by the public of the newspaper, but that took place in the realm of the objective reality instead of in that of the representations, a distinction full of complex implications because it had to do with a context of crisis which didn't appear to men's consciousness as a model on the way to exhaustion or overcoming, previously revealing itself in the search for alternatives for the forms of reiteration of the social life in force until then, and which suddenly appeared deprived of its old effectiveness.

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The installation of the Court in America also changed substantially the framing of the "lose and win" game among political spaces with their own interests and identities, a situation that generated conflict as actually occurred with the Revolution of Pernambuco of 1817. But on the opposite direction, now along the line of the valuation of the Brazilian unity that Hypólito praised so much, the raising (in 1815) of Brazil to the condition of United Kingdom represented, even though immediately only in the symbolic realm, an innovation based on which what had been a conglomerate of captainships linked by the subordination to the power of a same prince took the shape of political entity coated with the attributes of accurate territorial nature and of relying on a gravity center which, besides being that of the new kingdom, it was also that of the entire Monarchy.

In 1821, *Correio Braziliense* called the attention to the fact that the American representations to the Courts were moved basically by the "jealousy of some provinces in relation to the others [...] the true cause for Bahia to rather be subject to Lisbon than to Rio de Janeiro",¹³ a diagnosis authenticated by the lapidary formula of Lino Cotinho, for whom Brazil was an aggregate of "Provinces [that] are many other kingdoms that have no relationship with one another, they don't know general needs, each one of them [ruling itself] according to specific municipality laws".¹⁴ But in July he had changed his speech: "Brazil is a kingdom as is Portugal; it can't be divided and disgraced shall be those who attempt against its category and greatness, dismembering its provinces to [annihilate it]".¹⁵ His reference was the kingdom of Brazil, a recent political

construction that was “liberally conceived by the immortal D. João VI”,¹⁶ without any specifically valuated tradition to distinguish it within the Portuguese State, an emerging political entity which still lacked an emotional adhesion, some kind of patriotism referred to it.

It wasn't simple for the Portuguese and American elites to strip themselves from something as deeply-rooted as the Portuguese identity, a synthetic expression of its difference and superiority in the face of the many to whom that condition was out of reach. To consider themselves Portuguese was the core of the memory that made clear the nature of the relationships that they maintained with the rest of the social body in their private *fatherlands*, with that mass of people from other origins with whom, above whom or against whom the new political body of his or her nation should be organized.

With the independence of Brazil those elites were suddenly facing a task the complexity of which was stated with a sad accuracy of a metallurgist by José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva: “it's very necessary for such physical and civil heterogeneity to gradually cease. Therefore, let's take care from now on of combining wisely so many disagreeing and opposite elements, and *amalgamating* so many different metals, for a resulting homogeneous and compact *Whole*, that doesn't crumble with a small touch of any political convulsion “.¹⁷

Andrada's terms reveal that his generation struggled with the same paradox that had paralyzed the revolutionaries of 1817, and before that it had already announced itself in 1798 in Bahia: the impossible equivalence between *social body* and *nation* in a slavery context. In addition, once the “indivisibility of the union of the Monarchy” was broken, there was a change in the meanings of *fatherland* and *country*, different concepts but referred to reciprocally.

Even though as far as the course of the political identities in the American universe is concerned the previously mentioned variants have been kept, their meanings became, therefore, subject to change. From then on, the previous Portuguese-American identity could become *Brazilian*, and as such autonomize itself, being added to the cast of political identities that already co-existed at that time – the Portuguese one and the many anchored in courses established by the colonization, each one expressing a project of incompatible nation, in the limit, with those that the others contain. From then on, it was possible to think about the *Brazilian nation* if referred to the State – the kingdom of Brazil – which defined its outlines as politically imaginable community, going back once again to the terms of Benedict Anderson.

* * *

In 1807, the rustic man from Sergipe Antônio Muniz de Souza, who at the time was 25 years old, embarked with arms to serve his fatherland, which had been invaded by France. The shipwreck of the boat kept him in Pernambuco, without his goods and his hearing, which were lost in the accident. Once he recovered, he went from Recife to Rio de Janeiro, where he became a self-taught herbarium and a methodical observer of nature and of men, qualifications that

opened the doors of important power figures to him, with the sponsorship of whom he travelled in the Brazilian heartlands, which he got to know profoundly.

Fifteen years later and in a new political and military conjuncture, the former almost voluntary of the Portuguese troops once again served the demand of his patriotism, this time offering his services to the command of the Brazilian forces engaged in the expulsion of the Portuguese enemy who at the time was restricted to Salvador, the capital of the province of Bahia. The reason? He was convinced that “one of the main purposes of the [...] [liberal revolution of 1820] was to enslave and re-colonize Brazil” and because “all the rest of good friendship and trust that the generous Brazilian hearts conserved in relation to the Mother land, even though it has always showed itself as Step-Mother, evaporated” (Souza, 2000, p.191ss.), as he states in his memoirs.

Everything very simple.

Notes

- 1 Law of May 25th, 1773. About that, see Falcon & Novaes (1973, p.405-25).
- 2 Warrant of May 16th, 1773 (in Silva, 1858, p.640)
- 3 Official letter from the Governor of the captainship of Pernambuco, Manuel da Cunha Menezes, to the secretary of State of Navy and Oversea, Martinho de Melo e Castro, about the repercussion in Paraíba of the law that freed Blacks and Mulattos in Portugal (*Overseas Historical Archive* - Pernambuco, p.a. box 115, doc.8816). About the episode, see Silva (2001).
- 4 In *National Archive of the Tombo Tower* – War Council 244, 2 and 3 (Consultations of the Tobacco Junta). I had access to that document – quoted without indication of quota by Pinho (1946, p.138), by kindness of Nuno Monteiro and Vera Lúcia do Amaral Ferlini.
- 5 From his mother’s side, Antonio Gomes Ferrão Castelo Branco was the grandson of the backwoodsman from São Paulo Salvador Cardoso de Oliveira, who was married to a descendent from the Casa da Torre, Maria da Cruz Porto Carrero, established with cattle raising farms in the Rio das Velhas, at Pedra de Baixo alongside São Francisco River. About him, see Kantor (2004) and Priore (1997).
- 6 All those information are in “Borrador of Antonio Gomes Ferrão Castelo Branco” - *Borrador*, manuscript that belongs to the collection of the Guita and José Mindlin Library.
- 7 About that issue, see Monteiro (2003a and 2003b).
- 8 I thank both for the access to the preliminary results of your investigations.
- 9 About that, see specifically Jancsó & Slemian (2002).
- 10 The edition of the *Correio Braziliense* (CB) used is the *fac-similar* quoted in note #9.
- 11 Hypólito uses the expression “restore”, to signal that, more than a granting of power, he considered that reform as the restoration of ancestral liberties that were taken away.
- 12 About that, see Chiaramonte (2001).
- 13 *Correio Braziliense or Armazém Literário* (CB), London, W. Lewis, Paternoster-Row, v.XXVII, August of 1821 (apud De Paula, 2001, p.221).
- 14 Words by Lino Coutinho in the session of 3.6.1822 (apud Berbel, 1999, p.131).

- 15 Session of 7.3.1822. About that, see Berbel (1999, p.174ss.).
- 16 In session of 7.3.1822.
- 17 *Representation to the General Constituent and Legislative Assembly of the Empire of Brazil* about slavery (Falcão, 1963, v.II, p.126, where, in addition, slavery is treated once again as “cancer” – original emphasis). For an updated approach of Andrada’s political thought, see the introductory study in Dolhnikoff (1998).

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ABSTRACT - Starting from the analysis of the political meaning of *Brazil* and *Brazilian* in documents written by colonists in the mid 18th century, the article shows the analytical importance of the deviant character of the American variants of the *ancien régime* Portuguese social matrix. Working with the concepts of memory and experience, it points out the idea that, once the Portuguese national structures of both hemispheres became asymmetric (during the revolutionary conjuncture of the 1820s), they were also unable to fit into the same constitutional framework.

KEYWORDS - National Identity, Brazilian National State, Colony, Independence, Enslavement.

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Translated by Rodrigo Sardenberg. The original in Portuguese is available at http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_issuetoc&pid=0103-401420080001&lng=pt&nrm=iso.

Received on 2.22.2008 and accepted on 2.26.2008.